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S P E E C H

OF

HON. FRANCIS P. BLAIR, JR.,

OF MISSOURI,

ON

THE KANSAS QUESTION;

DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MARCH 23, 1859.



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S P E E C H.

The House being in the Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union—

Mr. BLAIR said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The attitude of the present Administration upon this Kansas question, and upon the question of slavery generally, has been discussed in almost every conceivable aspect. There is, however, one point of view in which it has not been treated in this Hall; and I propose to state, as frankly and candidly as I can, the position I conceive the Administration and the Democratic party hold upon this question; and also to discuss it in its bearings upon a large class of citizens of the southern States—the non-slaveholding people of those States. I make no apology for approaching this subject. I consider that the system of slavery, which has made the last two or three of our Presidents “fetch and carry” at its beck and nod; which has held the legislative power of this Government in its hands for a series of years; which has swayed even the decisions of the Supreme Court—is of sufficient importance to be discussed, to be grappled with, and to be subdued; and therefore I shall not heed the querulous complaint that this subject has been too much discussed.

It is this institution which has cast its dark shadow upon our land, and which threatens the existence of our free Constitution. I know full well that there is an instinct in the hearts of the people of this country whose ken looks beyond that of the most acute intellect, and which tells them that from this question they are to apprehend danger to the institutions of our country. I am aware that those gentlemen who were elected to this House as the friends of the President, have sufficiently exposed the forfeiture of the pledges made by him in his letter accepting his nomination, made at Cincinnati; and I consider that the violation of his pledges contained in his inaugural address, and in his instructions to Governor Walker, declaring his purpose to secure the people of Kansas the right to decide for themselves the institutions under which they were to live, have also been sufficiently exposed by those who

were elected here as Democrats. I never expected him to redeem those pledges. I always supposed they were made to be violated, and shall, therefore, express no surprise at the result. I always believed that Mr. Buchanan was nominated to carry out the policy of his predecessor, which was to fix slavery upon Kansas by force or fraud; and, in my opinion, not only Kansas, but the whole continent is embraced in this conspiracy. Hateful to me as is the design of forcing upon Kansas a constitution abhorred by her people, hateful as are the low and mean frauds by which that policy has been pushed, hateful as are the crimes by which, for the last three years, Kansas has been held in subjugation, still more hateful is the design which I believe has been deliberately formed to extend this constitution over the whole country. I shall give the President the benefit of his own language, to define his own position upon this question. I have in my hand his late special message transmitted to us with the Le-compton constitution; and I call the attention of his friends and admirers to this sentence:

“It has been solemnly adjudged, by the highest judicial tribunal known to our laws, that slavery exists in Kansas by virtue of the Constitution of the United States. Kansas is, therefore, at this moment, as much a slave State as Georgia or South Carolina. Without this, the equality of the sovereign States composing the Union would be violated, and the use and enjoyment of a Territory acquired by the common treasure of all the States, would be closed against the people and the property of nearly half the members of the Confederacy.”

Kansas is here called a *State*, and a *slave State—made so by the Constitution*, says the President, *and not by any act of her people*. And I desire to know, if the Constitution of the United States makes a slave State of Kansas, the people of which country have never yet given their assent to it, will not that same Constitution carry slavery into those States which acknowledge that constitution now assumed to establish slavery, in State or Territory, wherever the local laws are silent?

The argument of the President in this message, and in his annual message, and in the paper published by him in answer to certain gentlemen in Connecticut, goes to this point. He declares, in

effect, that neither Congress, nor the people of a Territory themselves, have the power to prohibit slavery in the Territories. I think his language goes even to the extent of maintaining that a State cannot prohibit or abolish slavery; for, Mr. Chairman, if neither the people of a Territory nor Congress can prohibit slavery for the reasons assigned by the President, the same reasoning would embrace the States made from territory acquired by "the Confederacy of sovereign States." How happens it that the people of the State of Iowa can prohibit slavery? That was territory acquired by the Confederacy of sovereign States. How can the people of the State of Iowa reverse the rule of justice any more than the people of the Territory of Iowa? The whole argument of the President, the argument of all who agree with him; the argument of the Supreme Court, all assign that as a reason why the people of a Territory cannot prohibit slavery, and why the Congress of the United States cannot exclude slavery from its Territories. It is all grounded on the fact that it is unjust to exclude the property of the people of any one portion of the Confederacy from that which was acquired by the people of the whole Confederacy.

Now, Iowa was acquired by the people of the whole Confederacy—that is, by the Government, representing the whole Confederacy; and it was quite as just and right for Iowa, while a Territory, to exclude slavery, as it was when she became a State. There is no difference. And how can this be accomplished? How can Iowa, or any State, prohibit slavery, if the positions taken by the President and the Democratic party are correct? The people of a Territory have not the power to do it; Congress has not the power; and yet, when the people of a Territory form a constitution, and Congress accepts that constitution—neither of these agencies having the power to exclude slavery—it is found, by some mysterious process, that the State thus created has acquired a power which neither agency concerned in its creation could impart to it. It strikes me, Mr. Chairman, that, if it be conceded that there is no power in Congress, or in the people of a Territory, to exclude the institution of slavery, it follows, as a matter of course, logically and legitimately, that the people of a State cannot do it. And, sir, I find that the organ of the Administration—the Washington Union—has taken that ground; and has declared that it draws the conclusion legitimately from the opinion of the Supreme Court in the Dred Scott case.

Mr. J. GLANCY JONES. Will the gentleman be good enough to tell me what that organ is? I am not aware that the Administration has an organ.

Mr. BLAIR. If anybody has a right to know what that organ is, the gentleman from Pennsylvania is the man.

Mr. J. GLANCY JONES. Be good enough to tell me.

Mr. BLAIR. I referred to the Washington Union by name.

Mr. J. GLANCY JONES. I merely wish to remark that I know of no paper recognized as the organ of the Administration.

Mr. BLAIR. Then the gentleman is ignorant of what is known by everybody else. I say that that paper declared in an article some time

ago that no State in the Union could abolish the institution of slavery; that it was unconstitutional to do so; and it grounded itself on the decision of the Supreme Court. I know that subsequently to that, the editor of that paper was elected, by a party vote, Printer of the Senate of the United States. That goes very far—though the gentleman [Mr. J. GLANCY JONES] repudiates the paper as the organ of the Administration—to fix it in the minds of the people that the Senate of the United States indorses his views on that subject, especially when we know that these offices go by favor, and that it is very seldom the case that a man is elected Printer, or to any other office, whose sentiments do not accord with those of the majority of the body that elects him. I know that last evening, in the other House, a very distinguished gentleman denied that this was the position of the Democratic party, and, in his place, called for proof. He denied that anybody from the South claimed that a State could not prohibit slavery within its limits. But I undertake to say that the claim is embodied in the extract which I have read from the President's special message, in which he calls Kansas a State, and says that *it is a slave State, and that it was made a slave State by the Federal Constitution, and not by the people.* That is the language of the President, and I have heard from every Democrat that has taken the floor in this or the other House, nothing but eulogy of that message, since it was published; and I consider that as an indorsement of the doctrines it contains.

But that is not all. This doctrine is contained in the Dred Scott decision. Every argument that is made to show that neither Congress nor the people of a Territory has the power to prohibit slavery in the Territory, is equally applicable to a State, and is more appropriate as applied to the States, because the Constitution was made for the States, and not for the Territories, and is the supreme law over the constitutions and statutes of the States. I think that is the doctrine of the Democratic party. They may disclaim it now, when it is proclaimed in all its nakedness; but they will yet come up to it whenever occasion offers to carry their principles to the result intended.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I ask those gentlemen who have been so clamorous about popular sovereignty, whether they accept this doctrine? I ask them if they propose to deny all that they have said on the subject of popular sovereignty, and if they will submit to have this institution injected into the Territories and States by what is claimed to be the Constitution of the United States? Will they do it? I suppose they will not be able to resist the majority of their own party in this matter, and they must either embrace this doctrine or be read out.

Now, it matters not to me what ground the leaders of that party assume. They may come forward to sustain this doctrine, and to sustain the policy of the last Administration in forcing upon Kansas an institution abhorred by a large majority of the people, and in forcing this institution on other States and Territories. I do not care how many judicial decisions shall sanction it, or how many regiments may be called out to enforce it; in my opinion, the attempt will fail. The Territories of this Government cannot be wrested from

the freemen to whom they belong, to be given up to slaveholders and their slaves, in order to strengthen the oligarchy which rests upon this servile institution.

Gentlemen have proclaimed upon this floor that the Lecompton constitution was accepted 'by a majority of the people of Kansas. Sir, in my belief, there is not a town or county in Kansas where the Lecompton convention could have sat and performed the work of fraud now before us, without the support of the Federal bayonets. I do not know one town or county in Kansas where they would have had the power to defy the will of the people as they have done, except under the protection of the Federal bayonets. The President tells us, and tells the country, in no equivocal language, that the government which he calls the rightful government of Kansas, would long ago have been subverted by these factious people out there, if it had not been supported by the Federal Army. This is a clear admission on his part that the government there is an usurpation; because there can be no government in violation of the sentiments of the people, unless it be an usurpation. But, sir, that government would have been subverted long ago, but for the interference of the President of the United States; and, whether the fact be admitted by the President or not, it cannot be successfully controverted that the President has exerted his entire energies—he has perverted the whole power and patronage of the Federal Government—to drive free white men out of the Territory of Kansas to make room for negro slaves.

Now, sir, there is a parallel to the history of this transaction which took place many centuries ago, and which I find in a book published nearly a century since. But it is so appropriate to the events that are now transpiring, that I hope the House will have the patience to hear me read it through. I read from Hook's History of Rome, to show how the great Republic of antiquity fell to decay, when it ceased to cherish the people as landholders, and became an oligarchy, by the very means now being employed in our own:

"It is recorded of Tiberius Gracchus that, in crossing Hetruria in his way to Spain, he observed that there were no other husbandmen or laborers in the country than slaves; and, according to Plutarch, the people—by writings affixed to the porticos, walls, and tombs—daily exhorted Tiberius to procure a restitution of the public lands to the injured poor.

"From the earliest times of Rome," proceeds the historian, "it had been the custom of the Romans, when they subdued any of the nations in Italy, to deprive them of a part of their territory. A portion of these lands were sold, and the rest given to the poorer citizens, on condition, says Appian, of their paying annually a tenth of the corn and a fifth of the fruits of the trees, besides a certain number of great and small cattle. In process of time, the rich, by various means, got possession of the lands destined for the subsistence of the poor. This gave occasion to the law obtained by Licinius Stolo, about the year of Rome 366, forbidding any Roman citizen to hold more than five hundred acres of land, or to have on his estate more than one hundred great and five hundred small cattle, and requiring that a certain number of freemen should be employed to cultivate the farms. "But, notwithstanding these precautions, the Licinian law (observed for some time to the great benefit of the public) fell at length under total disuse. The rich and mighty continued to possess themselves of the lands of their poor neighbors."³ "To cultivate the farms they employed foreign slaves. So that Italy was in danger of losing its inhabitants of free condition, (who had no encouragement to marry, no means to educate children,) and of being overrun with slaves, and barbarians, that had neither affection for the Republic nor interest in her preservation."

"Tiberius Gracchus, now a tribune of the people, undertook to remedy these disorders;" * * * * * "and to soften the matter, Tiberius not only proposed to remit the fines hitherto incurred by the transgressors of the Licinian law, but also, out of the public money, to pay to the present possessors the price of the lands that were to be taken from them." "Never (says Plutarch) was proposed a law more mild and gentle against iniquity and oppression." For these were public lands of which the rich had taken possession with their slaves; "yet the rich made a mighty clamor about the hardship of being strip of their houses, their lands, their inheritances, the burial places of their ancestors, the unspeakable confusion such innovations would produce, the estates in question (acquired by robbery) being settled upon the wives and children of the possessors; and to raise an odium against Gracchus, they gave out that ambition, not a view to the public good, had put him upon this project." * * * * * "The poor, on the other hand, complained of the extreme indigence to which they were reduced, and of their inability to bring up children. They enumerated the many battles they had fought in defense of the Republic, notwithstanding which, they were allowed no share of the public lands; nay, the usurpers, to cultivate them, choose rather to employ slaves than citizens of Rome. Gracchus's view was not to make poor men rich, but to strengthen the Republic by an increase of useful members, upon which he thought the safety and welfare of Italy depended. The insurrection and war of the slaves in Sicily, who were not yet quelled, furnished him with sufficient argument for expatiating on the danger of filling Italy with slaves."

"On the day when the tribes met to determine concerning the law, the Tribune maintaining his cause, which was in itself just and noble, with an eloquence that would have set off a bad one, appeared to his adversaries terrible and irresistible. He asked the rich whether they preferred a slave to a citizen; a man unqualified to serve in war to a soldier; an alien to a member of the Republic; and which they thought would be more zealous for its interests? Then as to the miseries of the poor, he said: 'The wild beasts or Italy have caves and dens to shelter them; but the people who expose their lives for the defense of Italy, are allowed nothing but the light and air. They wander up and down with their wives and children, without house, and without habitation. Our generals mock the soldiers; when in battle, they exhort them to fight for their sepulchers and their household gods; for, amongst all that great number of Romans, there is not one who has either a domestic altar or a sepulcher for his ancestors. They fight and die, solely to maintain the riches and luxury of others, and are styled the lords of the universe, while they have not a single foot of ground in their possession.'"

After much resistance from the Patricians, the Tribune finally procured the passage of the law:

"And it being resolved that Triumvirs, or three commissioners, should be constituted for the execution of it, the people named to that employment, Tiberius himself, his father in law Appius Claudius, and Caius Gracchus, who at this time was in Spain, serving under Scipio in the Numantine war. These Triumvirs were to examine and judge what lands belonged to the public, as well as to make the intended distribution of them."

Before the law could be put into operation Tiberius was assassinated in the Senate House by certain Senators "who possessed much of the public lands and were extremely unwilling to part with them." These Senators, it is said by the historian, were aided by their clients and slaves, and the blow "which probably dispatched him, he received from a man named L. Rufus, who afterwards gloried in the action." Cicero, who was the orator and partisan of the oligarchy, and whose false glosses in regard to these transactions have been followed by all the historians in the interest of the privileged orders, was himself constrained to admit

"That Tiberius Gracchus came nothing short of the virtue of his father, or his grandfather, Africanius, but in this, that he forsook the party of the Senate."

Sallust, the great and perspicacious historian, in a letter to the greatest general and statesman of the Romans, Julius Caesar, exhorting him to restore the Commonwealth, gives in a single sen-

tence the whole history of Rome, after the Roman people were robbed of all ownership in the soil to feed the grandeur and employ the slaves of the nobility. He says, and I desire to mark the sentence:

"Men of the lowest rank, whether occupying their farms at home or serving in the wars, were amply satisfied themselves, and gave ample satisfaction to their country, so long as they possessed what was sufficient to subsist them. But when, being thrust out of possession of their lands by a gradual usurpation, they, through indigence and idleness, (having nothing to do,) could no longer have any fixed abodes, then they began to covet the wealth of other men, and to put their own liberty and the Commonwealth to sale."

The law procured by Tiberius Gracchus has been denounced by all the writers in the interest of the privileged classes from that day to this as an agrarian law, a law to take from the rich and to give to the poor, when the fact is, Mr. Chairman, that it was a law to distribute among the people the lands which belonged to the public; and now a similar attempt is made by the party of oligarchs in this country to seize the Territories of this Government and plant them with slaves to the exclusion of freemen, and they follow the example of their Roman prototypes and denounce those who oppose them in their schemes as Free-Soilers. I do not know but that the term "agrarian," taken in its true sense, might well stand for a translation of the term "Free-Soiler." In that sense, in the sense of distributing to the people the lands which belong to them, I have no hesitation in accepting the designation; and to show that there is as great necessity for this measure now as there was at the time when Tiberius Gracchus described the destitution of the Roman people, who made that Republic the mistress of the world, I will read from some high authorities in regard to the condition of the non-slaveholding white men of the South, who constitute a large majority of its citizens. I shall quote first the language of the Senator from Alabama, [Mr. CLAY.] He is giving an account, in a speech made in Alabama, of the condition of his own State, and more particularly of his own county. He says:

"In traversing that county, one will discover numerous farm houses, once the abode of industrious and intelligent freemen, now occupied by slaves or tenantless, deserted, and dilapidated; he will observe fields, once fertile, now unfenced, abandoned, and covered with those evil harbingers, fox-tail and broomsedge; he will see the moss growing on the moldering walls of once thrifty villages, and will find 'one only master grasps the whole domain,' that once furnished happy homes for a dozen white families."

This is the language of a distinguished Senator from Alabama, describing his own county, and I should suppose that if that gentleman knew anything at all, he would know the condition of the county in which he resides. Nor is it to be supposed that he would exaggerate that which is by no means flattering to his county or his State.

Mr. William Gregg, in a paper before the South Carolina Institute, handling the same subject, remarks:

"Any man who is an observer of things could hardly pass through our country without being struck with the fact that all the capital, enterprise, and intelligence is, that a large portion of our poor white people are wholly neglected, and are suffered to while away an existence in a state but one step in advance of the Indian of the forest. It is an evil of vast magnitude, and nothing but a change in public sentiment will effect its cure."

I propose to read what was said in the Vir-

ginia Legislature in 1832, by a gentleman who is now a distinguished member of this House, [Mr. FAULKNER.] He says:

"Slavery, it is admitted, is an evil. It is an institution which presses heavily against the best interests of the State. It banishes free white labor; it exterminates the mechanic, the artisan, the manufacturer; it deprives them of occupation; it deprives them of bread; it converts the energy of a community into indolence, its power into impotency, its efficiency into weakness. Sir, being thus injurious, have we not a right to demand its extermination? Shall society suffer, that the slaveholder may continue to gather his crop of human flesh? What is his mere pecuniary claim, compared with the great interests of the common weal? Must the country languish, droop, die, that the slaveholder may flourish? Shall all interests be subservient to one—all rights subordinate to those of the slaveholder? Has not the mechanic, have not the middle classes, their rights—rights incompatible with the existence of slavery?"

And now, sir, I shall conclude these quotations by reading from another very distinguished southern gentleman, who has recently been chosen from the very *elite* of the chivalry of South Carolina to represent his State in the most august and dignified body in the land—I refer to Governor HAMMOND. Here is his testimony as to their condition, in an address before the South Carolina Institute, in 1850:

"They obtain a precarious subsistence by occasional jobs, by hunting, by fishing, by plundering fields or folds, and too often by what is in its effects far worse—trading with slaves, and seducing them to plunder for their benefit."

I do not know whether this picture is an accurate one or not. It is not true when applied to the slave States in which I have resided. It is not true, where slavery obtains nominally, or where the slaves are few; and especially it is not true of the city and county which I represent upon this floor. The working men and mechanics of St. Louis have too just a sense of the dignity of their own employments to permit themselves to be degraded by the competition of negro slaves. A man might as well attempt to educate his negro for the legal profession as to attempt to put him at a mechanical trade in competition with the mechanics of my district. But, sir, if it be true in regard to those remote southern States where the slaves fill every industrial avocation and employment, why did the Carolinian stop short in his heart-rending description? Why did he not exclaim with the Roman tribune, "shall we prefer our slaves to the citizens of the Republic; men incapable of bearing arms to soldiers?" Unless some voice shall speak that language in tones that will be heard by the people, the history of this country will be written in a sentence, similar to that I have read from Sallust. If by gradual usurpation the people are thrust out of their lands by this dominating oligarchy, they will, as they did in Rome, "put their own liberty and the Commonwealth to sale."

It is very clear that the Senator from South Carolina does not prefer the citizens of the Republic to his slaves. He has, in his recent speech, shown that he was the mouthpiece of the privileged classes—the Cicero of this new oligarchy, and not a tribune of the people. In that speech he says:

"The Senator from New York said yesterday that the whole world had abolished slavery. Ay, the name, but not the thing; and all the powers of the earth cannot abolish it. God only can do it when He repeals the *fiat*, 'the poor ye always have with you,' for the man who lives by daily labor, and scarcely lives at that, and who has to put out his labor in the market and take the best he can get for it; in short,

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your whole class of manual laborers and operatives, as you call them, are slaves. The difference between us is, that our slaves are hired for life and well compensated; there is no starvation, no begging, no want of employment among our people, and not too much employment either. Yours are hired by the day, not cared for, and scarcely compensated, which may be proved in the most deplorable manner, at any hour, in any street in any of your large towns."

* * * * *

"Your slaves are white, of your own race; you are brothers of one blood. They are your equals in natural endowment of intellect, and they feel galled by their degradation. Our slaves do not vote. We give them no political power. Yours do vote, and being the majority, they are the depositaries of all your political power. If they knew the tremendous secret, that the ballot-box is stronger than an army with bayonets, and could combine, where would you be? Your society would be reconstructed, your government reconstructed, your property divided, not as they have mistakenly attempted to initiate such proceedings by meeting in parks, with arms in their hands, but by the quiet process of the ballot-box. You have been making war upon us to our very heart-stones. How would you like for us to send lecturers or agitators North; to teach these people this, to aid and assist in combining, and to lead them?"

"Mr. WILSON and others. Send them along."

"Mr. HAMMOND. You say, send them North. There is no need of that. They are coming here. They are thundering at our doors for homesteads of one hundred and sixty acres of land for nothing, and southern Senators are supporting it." * * * * * "Transient and temporary causes have thus far been your preservation. The great West has been open to your surplus population, and your hordes of semi-barbarous emigrants, who are crowding in year by year. They make a great movement, and you call it progress."

Sir, he prefers his slaves to the citizens of the Republic, and would have the latter deprived of the right of elective franchise, as his negro slaves are. He denounces the man who lives by daily labor, and the whole class of manual laborers and operatives, as slaves. He characterizes our foreign population as a horde of semi-barbarous emigrants, and he would deny them a share of the public lands upon which to build their homes, and educate their children. How would this gentleman have appeared leading the Democratic column in the days of General Jackson's administration? Why, sir, there would have been somebody else read out of that party—rather different persons from those who are now being read out. If this is Democratic doctrine, it is a novel doctrine to me, though I have been reared a Democrat. I make no complaint, however, of having been read out of the party. I should as soon think of complaining of being read out of a chain-gang. [Laughter.] It is not a Democracy which I should wish to sustain, by any means. I have always understood that Democracy concerns itself more about personal rights than about rights of property—the rights of individuals rather than those of monopolizing institutions. In this I may be mistaken, and certainly I am mistaken, if the revelations under this new dispensation are to be received.

Suppose this doctrine had obtained at the time California was acquired. When we acquired California, and the gold discoveries were made there, it is very well known that a working-man could earn in California \$1,000 a year by his labor. That was then the value of an able-bodied slave in the old slave States. Do you not suppose that a great many of them would have been carried to California under such a stimulus as that? A distinguished politician of Virginia, in a letter which he addressed to the public press, or to some individual, pending the last presidential election, in speaking of this subject, calculated that Virginia

had lost several hundred million dollars by not being permitted to carry her slaves to California; "because," he said, "if a slave could have been taken to California, where he could earn \$1,000 a year, instead of being worth \$1,000, he would have been worth \$5,000. Why, sir, the profit of the business of carrying slaves to California would have been greater than the profits of the African slave trade, without its perils. If the decision of 1857 had been made in 1847, so that slaves could have been removed to California, the whole demand for labor in that land of gold would have been supplied by slaves, and the busy marts of trade, and the gold mines of that country, would have been blackened with slaves, and not a foot of land in the whole State would have been left for the white man to stand upon, and in that way the free white men of this country would have been excluded from their own inheritance—the land they won by their own strong arms."

That is what these gentlemen call Democracy. They are willing to see the free white men of the country excluded from every Territory, and especially from those where the reward of labor is great; and they claim that it is their constitutional right that it shall be done; and they call it Democracy. Why, sir, I want to know whether the white man has not the same right of property in his own labor as the slaveholder has in the labor of his slave? If you exclude the free white man from the Territories, do not you diminish the value of his labor just as you diminish the value of the slave to the owner by excluding them? Which are we to choose between, the millions and millions of free white men in this country, or the few thousand slaveholders? Was the Government founded to protect rights of property in slave labor, and not to protect the rights of freemen to their own labor? This Democracy is very tender of the property of the slaveholder, and is utterly regardless of the rights of property of any other class of people in the Territories.

Now, I apply another test. The oligarchy say that they have the right to take their slaves into the Territories of the Union, and employ them as they see fit, under the Constitution of the United States, and nobody can take that right from them. They can take them into the Territories and make them mechanics, and work them in the mines, in the factories, or in any other way; and if white men don't like that sort of competition the Democracy will tell them to go somewhere else. In Russia, a man can educate his serf or slave, and they frequently do, and make lawyers, doctors, and merchants of them. Now, suppose these southern gentlemen should exercise their constitutional right of educating their slaves, and put them into the learned professions; do you suppose the people of this country would submit, for one instant, to this Russian innovation? Would there not be a cry raised from one end of this land to the other; and why? Have they not the same constitutional right to make lawyers, doctors, and merchants, of their slaves as they have to make them mechanics? Precisely the same. There is no difference whatever. But the Russian nobles never engage in those avocations themselves, and therefore they do not feel the degradation of putting these serfs into the professions. But with us that would be trenching upon the occupation of the slaveholders themselves—the oligarchs—

and here the shoe pinches. They demand that they shall be allowed to put their slaves to work side by side with mechanics and laborers; and, in the same breath, they claim that no slave shall be allowed to degrade the employments in which they condescend to engage. I contend that they have no more right to inflict this degradation on mechanics, by placing slave labor in competition with their free labor. Not a whit more; and, as they exercise the right of excluding slaves from the professions in which they are themselves engaged, (as they do by inhibiting their education,) I say they admit the right of others to exclude them from the mechanical trades, and from competition with every freeman who follows an honest calling.

There was a time when this Democratic party was not Democratic in name alone. There was a time when this party took ground against privileged classes, and against every attempt on the part of capitalists to usurp the power of this Government, and pervert it to their own purposes. I instance the case of the United States Bank, where the stockholders undertook to force this Government to allow them to bank on the national revenue. The Democratic party took issue with them, and put them down. Since that time we have had the tariff discussion, where the manufacturing interests of the country—a vast aggregation of wealth—undertook to influence legislation, and effect the passage of laws for their especial benefit, in derogation of the rights and interests of the working classes of the country. The Democratic party took ground against the high protective tariff, and defeated it.

And now here is another question in which this struggle between capital and labor is presented in its most odious and revolting form. Here is a colossal aggregation of wealth invested in negroes, which undertakes to seize this Government to pervert it to its own purpose, and to prevent the freemen of the country from entering the Territories except in competition with slave labor; and the Democratic party, instead of standing where it used to stand, in opposition to these anti-Democratic measures, is as servile a tool of the oligarchy as are the negro slaves themselves.

This is no question of North and South. It is

a question between those who contend for caste and privilege, and those who neither have nor desire to have privileges beyond their fellows. It is the old question that has always, in all free countries, subsisted—the question of the wealthy and crafty few endeavoring to steal from the masses of the people all the political power of the Government. Those gentleman are wrong who say that it is a question of North and South. If there is one class of people on this continent more interested than another in putting a stop to the extension of slavery into the Territories, it is the free white laborers of the South. They have infinitely more interest in the matter than any other class of the people, because they have felt the pressure of the institution. They have been shut out from all ownership in the soil, and driven out of all employment in the States where slavery now exists; and should we allow the territories of the Government to be closed against them, they will have no escape from the oppression which has ground them to the dust. No, sir, it is not a question between the North and South. It is a question which commends itself especially to the non-slaveholding and laboring white men of the South.

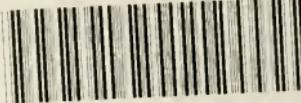
Now, sir, this controversy will, in my opinion, end in great good. In the struggle which terminated the American Revolution, the principles of liberty were so deeply instilled in the heart of the people, that when that struggle ended, the slaves were emancipated in a large number of the States, from the impulse which the love of liberty received in that contest. This struggle, which is on the same principle, will terminate in the same way. I know that there are as good men in the South now as there were in the days of the Revolution. There are men—slaveholders—now there who burn to emulate the noble examples of the illustrious men of the Revolution; and the noble State which I have the honor, in part, to represent on this floor, will, in my opinion, have the glory of leading the way in this magnanimous career. Her honor and interest alike beckon her, and that she will not be insensible to these high motives nor regardless of the glorious destiny which awaits her, the legend which she bears upon her shield, "*salus populi suprema lex esto*," sufficiently attests.

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